

enabling a user to select the advertising image;

at a central location coupled to the computer network, determining the identity of the user when said advertising image is selected;

at the central location, allocating [to the user] a reward associated with the image, wherein said allocating step includes

storing a reward identifier associated with the identity of the user in a database, said reward identifier identifying a promotional incentive associated with a separate transaction; and

optionally redirecting the local computer to content associated with the image.

17. (Amended) A computer-implemented method for interactively and electronically distributing and redeeming rewards via a computer network, the computer network coupled to a user computer and a central computer, the central coupled to a database, the computer network also coupled to a plurality of promoter computers, the method comprising the steps of:

at the user computer, displaying an advertising image comprising a reward indicator;

enabling a user to select the advertising image;

at a central computer, determining the identity of the user;

at the central computer, allocating to the user a reward associated with the reward indicator by storing a reward identifier in the database associated with an identity of the user said reward identifying a promotional incentive associated with a separate transaction; and

causing the user computer to connect with one of the plurality of promoter computers associated with the selected advertising image;

when the user wishes to redeem a reward, the central computer providing the user computer with a list of rewards associated with the user as stored in the database;

allowing the user to select a reward;

y32 redeeming the reward at the one of the plurality of promoter computers associated with the selected reward.

19. (Amended) An interactive reward allocation and redemption method comprising:

providing a central computer coupled to a central database for storing rewards allocated to users, the central computer coupled to a computer network of user computers and promoter computers said rewards identifying promotional incentives associated with separate transactions;

if a user at a user computer selects an advertisement with a reward indicator:

y33 (a) obtaining information to identify the user when the advertisement is selected,

(b) allocating a reward to the user in the central database, the reward associated with the selected advertisement and a promoter, and

(c) transferring control to a promoter computer associated with the selected advertisement; and

if a user at a user computer indicates that the user desires to redeem a reward allocated to the user:

(a) obtaining information to identify the user,

(b) providing to the user a list of rewards allocated to the user,

(c) allowing the user to select one of the rewards in the list of rewards, and

(d) instructing the promoter to honor the reward.

20. (Amended) An interactive computer-controlled reward system to allow a user to collect rewards, the system comprising:

a computer network;

a user computer coupled to the computer network, the user computer enabling the user to select advertising images with associated reward indicators;

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a central computer coupled to the computer network, the central computer comprising a database, the database storing a list of available offers, said offers identifying promotional incentives associated with separate transactions and including rewards and conditions associated with the available offers and a promoter and [a] registered users and the rewards allocated to each user; and

a promoter computer coupled to the computer network;

wherein, when the user selects an advertising image with an associated reward indicator, control is passed to the central computer which identifies the user and allocates a reward to the user associated with the selected image.

32. (Amended) An interactive computer-controlled reward system to allow a user to redeem rewards previously collected by the user, each reward associated with a promoter and identifying a promotional incentive associated with a separate transaction, the system comprising:

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a computer network;

a central computer coupled to the computer network, the central computer comprising a database, the database storing a list of registered users and a list of rewards that have been previously collected by each user and that are available for redemption;

a user computer coupled to the computer network, the user computer enabling the user to select a reward for redemption from the list of rewards: and

a promoter computer coupled to the computer network, the promoter computer operated by a promoter;

y34 wherein, when the user wishes to redeem a reward, control is passed to the central computer which identifies the user and allows the user to select a reward from the list of rewards, and thereafter control is passed to the promoter computer for the user to redeem the selected reward.

38. (Amended) An interactive reward allocation and redemption system comprising:

a central database for storing rewards allocated to users;

a central computer coupled to the central database and to a computer network of user computers and promoter computers;

y35 means, located at the central computer, for obtaining information to identify a user;

means, located at the central computer, for allocating a reward to the user in the central database if the user at a user computer selects an advertisement with an optional reward indicator, the reward associated with the selected advertisement and a promoter, said reward further identifying a promotional incentive associated with a separate transaction;

means, located at the central computer, for transferring control to a promoter computer associated with the selected advertisement; and

means, located at the central computer, for providing to the user a list of rewards allocated to the user;

means, located at the central computer, for enabling the user to select one of the rewards in the list of rewards; and

means to instruct the promoter computer of the promoter associated with the selected reward that a valid reward has been selected for redemption by the user.
